



## Measuring Inclusion Tool for Municipal Governments.

2019

### Terminology

This document provides definitions for terms used in AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool for Municipal Governments. The full version of the Measuring Inclusion Tool is available at [wic.auma.ca](http://wic.auma.ca).



# Terms.

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These definitions have been adapted from **Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations**, **The City of Ottawa’s Equity and Inclusion Lens**, the **UC Berkeley Gender Equity Centre’s Definition of Terms web page**, **Training for Change’s Glossary**, **Canadian Human Rights Commission**, **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**, **VisitAble Housing Canada**, **AUMA’s WIC Glossary of Terms**, and **Wikipedia.com**

## **Accommodation**

Accommodation is the process of making alterations to the delivery of services so that those services become accessible to more people, including persons with disabilities. In terms of employment, accommodation is the process of making alterations in the work environment that ensures persons with different needs are able to fully participate on the job and do not face discrimination in employment under any of the ‘grounds’ protected in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

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## **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing includes market-based housing and non-marketing housing (often referred to as ‘social housing’ or ‘government-subsidized housing’). The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation considers housing to be affordable when a household spends less than 30 per cent of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter.

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## **Bias**

A tendency to be for or against an individual or group without a justified reason. A bias limits a person or group’s ability to look at a situation objectively, and shapes how they act in the situation, often unfairly. An example of a bias is a landlord believing that it’s easier to rent to people who speak English as a first language. There may be no good reason for her to believe that, but it will influence her actions when she decides who to rent to.

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## **Community**

Community is the collection of people, businesses and organizations that reside within the boundaries of the municipality.

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## **Disability**

Refers to physical, mental, or emotional conditions that limit and/or shape an individual’s participation in work and society. Disabilities may involve mobility, agility, visual, speech, hearing, learning, and cognitive characteristics. Canadian law requires employers to accommodate people with disabilities to ensure their maximum participation and contribution.

# Terms (Continued)

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## **Discrimination**

Discrimination is an action or decision that treats a person or group badly for reasons such as their race, ethnicity, colour of skin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, disability, or genetic characteristics.

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### **Individual Discrimination**

When an individual discriminates against others for being members of a particular social group. For example, an employer who rejects all black persons who apply for a job.

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### **Institutional Discrimination**

When organizations or institutions (e.g. schools, municipalities, corporations) have policies, procedures or informal practices that give one social group (usually a mainstream group) advantages over another (usually a marginalized group). For example, a company only gives days off for Christian religious holidays.

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### **Systemic Discrimination**

Systemic discrimination occurs when a whole society or culture has widespread beliefs, practices and systems that advantage one social group over another. When discrimination is woven into the fabric of our society, it's more powerful, and more difficult to root out. For example, transgender people experience systemic discrimination in Canada. This means that the idea that transgender people are abnormal, unhealthy, deviant or dangerous shows up in every structure of our society – the legal system, health care, housing, employment, as well as media and the arts. Because many people hold such ideas about transgender people, laws and policies are created that discriminate against them; but because those laws and policies are in place, it's easy to believe that those discriminatory ideas are 'natural' and right. This creates a cycle of discrimination that's hard to end.

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## **Diversity**

Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. Celebrating diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing and relating to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own to understand how each person contributes to the good of the community.

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## **Equality**

Equality means treating everyone the same and providing everyone with access to exactly the same resources, services and opportunities, regardless of differences in their social group or situation. It assumes that we're all starting from a 'level playing field', that we've all had access to the same resources and opportunities, and that none of us have experienced systemic discrimination or privilege. When working on inclusion, it is important to distinguish between approaches that focus on equality as compared to equity.

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## **Equity**

Equity involves trying to give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equity acknowledges that we are different: some people may be advantaged and already have greater access to resources and opportunities, and others may be disadvantaged, and as a result have different or additional needs. These disadvantages can be from historical injustices or current discrimination. Equity asks us to 'level the playing field'. For example, if you and I are sharing a cake, equality means we split the cake exactly in half. But if I just had dinner and you haven't eaten since breakfast, equity means that you get the larger share of cake so that we can both feel full at the end of the day.

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## **Ethnicity**

An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population of people whose members identify with each other, based on a real or assumed common ancestry. Ethnicity assumes that the group of people shares cultural traits and a group history.

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# Terms (Continued)

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## **Gender**

Social categories that assign qualities of masculinity and femininity to people and calls them men or women. Sex and gender are not the same. Sex refers to the biological state of having certain genitalia, certain chromosomes or certain hormones in one's body, while gender is about one's appearance, mannerisms and roles, or one's internal sense of gender. Words that refer to gender include man, woman, transgender, masculine, and feminine. Words that refer to sex include female, male and intersex.

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## **Identity**

The social characteristics that make up a person's identity such as their age, race, ethnicity, occupation, political opinions or many other factors. Each characteristic is not mutually exclusive and as such, can be viewed as layers of identity. A person may be discriminated against by one or many of their layers. For example, an Indigenous woman who lives on social assistance could experience discrimination because she is a woman, or because of she is Indigenous or because of her income level. Sometimes a person chooses their identity (e.g. occupation) and sometimes it is out of their control (e.g. age).

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## **Inclusion**

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming community embraces human differences, sees them as strengths, and offers respect in both words and actions for all people.

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## **Indigenous Peoples**

This term refers collectively to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. The word recognizes the fact that Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of Canada. The term is similar to Aboriginal peoples. There are other words that Indigenous peoples may use to describe themselves and therefore, it is a good practice to ask how people wish to be named.

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## **LGBTQ+**

This acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and queer. The plus sign is included to encompass other spectrums of sexuality and gender. There are many variations of this acronym, but we use this one in the evaluation tool.

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## **Mainstream**

The centre or in-group. The mainstream sets the tone for a group or organization or society, its own preferences become the norms for the group, and it provides most of the leadership for carrying out the mission of the group. The mainstream may or may not be conscious of its role and higher status. Everyone is a member of some mainstream or other: even a working class Jewish radical lesbian may be able-bodied, for example, and "able-bodied" is a mainstream identity. When we talk about the mainstream, we contrast it with the marginalized.

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## **Marginalized**

Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community. People are often marginalized in societies or communities due to the effects of structural inequality (see below). A person may be marginalized based on gender, skin colour, income level, education, age, sexual orientation, religion, race, ethnicity, immigration status, language, occupation, heritage or other factors.

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## **Municipality**

Municipality is the local government organization – the corporate entity (e.g. city, town, village, summer village, specialized municipality, municipal district) and local authority that provides services, facilities and infrastructure for the community. It represents the elected officials, employees, policies and practices of the municipal government. The term 'municipality' should not be used interchangeably with 'community' in this tool.

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# Terms (Continued)

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## **Public space**

Refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, ability, or socio-economic level. These are public gathering spaces such as plazas, squares and parks. Connecting spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, are also public spaces.

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## **Racialization**

Using social markers (e.g. skin colour, cultural habits, dress, language, religions, political beliefs and surnames) to label or perceive a person of a certain community as different from “whiteness”. If you are racialized, you are likely to receive unequal treatment in society.

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## **Senior**

People over the age of 65.

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## **Structural Inequality**

Occurs when the fabric of organizations, institutions, governments or social networks contain an embedded bias which provides advantages for some members and marginalizes or produces disadvantages for other members. This can involve property rights, status, or unequal access to health care, housing, education and other physical or financial resources or opportunities.

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## **Systemic discrimination**

Refer to ‘*Discrimination*’.

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## **Transgender/Trans**

A broadly used umbrella term that refers to all individuals who cross the socially constructed line of masculinity or femininity. Trans includes people who reject, or who are not comfortable with, in whole or in part, their birth-assigned gender identities. It includes diverse groups of people: pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative people; male and female cross-dressers, “drag queens” or “drag kings”.

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## **Underrepresented**

When a certain group of people have disproportionately less persons in an organization, field of work, or political system, compared to their proportion of the average population. Often, underrepresentation is not a coincidence, but a result of systemic discrimination. For example, if the average population of Indigenous people in a community is 8 per cent but only 2 per cent of the municipal workforce is Indigenous, then Indigenous people are underrepresented and may be facing discrimination in hiring or retention.

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## **Visitability**

The term refers to single-family housing that is designed to be lived in or visited by persons who are physically challenged by stairs or those who use wheelchairs or walkers. Visitability allows for greater mobility and social interaction for persons that are aging, persons with physical disabilities as well as parents with strollers. A visitable house has:

- One entrance without steps;
  - Wider doorways and hallways for clear passage throughout the main floor; and
  - A washroom on the main floor that is accessible to persons who use mobility devices.
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## **Youth**

People aged 15 to 30.

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*For more terminology on diversity and inclusion, download AUMA's WIC Glossary of Terms at [wic.auma.ca](http://wic.auma.ca)*

